

# The Proliferation Security Initiative

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## What Is the Proliferation Security Initiative?

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a global effort that aims to stop trafficking of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern worldwide. Launched by President Bush on May 31, 2003, U.S. involvement in the PSI stems from the U.S. National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction issued in December 2002. That strategy recognizes the need for more robust tools to defeat the proliferation of WMD around the world, and specifically identifies interdiction as an area where greater focus will be placed.

The goal of the PSI is to create a more dynamic, creative, and proactive approach to preventing proliferation to or from nation states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Actions taken in support of the PSI will be consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks. PSI participants seek to use existing authorities -- national and international -- to defeat proliferation and to work to strengthen those authorities as necessary. More than 60 countries around the world have indicated their support for PSI.

In September 2003, the PSI participants at the time agreed to the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles. The PSI Principles identify specific steps participants can take to effectively interdict WMD-related trafficking and prevent proliferation. Participation in the PSI is voluntary. PSI partners encourage all states to endorse the PSI, and to take the steps outlined in the Principles, including steps in support of PSI operational activities. Support for the PSI is an acknowledgment of the need for stronger measures to defeat proliferators through cooperation with other countries.



**Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, right, applauds President Bush after his speech at the Wawel Castle in Krakow, Poland, May 31, 2005, announcing the Proliferation Security Initiative. (AP/WWP photo)**



**An Italian Air Force F-16 intercepts a U.S. Navy P-3C during "Exercise Air Brake 04," a multilateral aviation interdiction training exercise in the Mediterranean Sea in February 2004. (U.S. Navv)**

The PSI is part of a cooperative international counterproliferation effort intended to apply intelligence, diplomatic, law enforcement, military, and other tools at our disposal to prevent transfers of WMD-related items to states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. UN Security Council Resolution 1540, adopted unanimously by the Security Council, called on all states to take cooperative action to prevent trafficking in WMD. The PSI is a positive way to take such cooperative action. In 2004, the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change encouraged all states to participate in PSI; in March, in a speech in Madrid, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan applauded the efforts of the PSI to "fill a gap in our defenses."

## Why Do We Need the PSI?

While States have cooperated for many years to combat WMD proliferation and prevent specific shipments of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials, these efforts have largely been ad hoc. We have come to recognize, however, that the increasingly sophisticated and aggressive measures taken by states and non-state actors to traffic in and obtain these items require like-minded nations to coordinate efforts to address this urgent challenge.



**Italian firefighters dressed in chemical, biological, radiological (CBR) suits set up a perimeter of warning signs around a container suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction (WMD) during exercise "Clever Sentinel 2004," a multilateral maritime interdiction training exercise led by Italy in the Mediterranean Sea. (U.S. Navy)**

The significant technological advances and explosion in global trade of the last several decades have, unfortunately, made it easier for those who would threaten our security to obtain WMD materials and technical expertise. We have seen the emergence of black-market operatives who, for the right price, are only too willing to use their knowledge, access to materials, and personal connections to provide WMD-related goods and services to countries of proliferation concern and to would-be WMD terrorists. A.Q. Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist who oversaw a global network for the proliferation of nuclear technology and know-how, is the most widely known of these black marketeers. These proliferators and their facilitators work aggressively to circumvent export controls, establish front companies to deceive legitimate firms into

selling them WMD-related materials, ship WMD-related materials under false or incomplete manifests, and launder their financial proceeds through established banking institutions. And we have seen a relatively new dynamic where proliferators are shipping to other proliferators, to circumvent export controls and other traditional non-proliferation tools.

Today's clearer understanding of the nature of proliferation threat has brought widespread appreciation of the need for more concerted efforts, including higher priority attention at senior government levels, to halt WMD trafficking, before and after a shipment heads toward its destination.

The PSI builds on our interdiction experience to date and uses the full range of counterproliferation tools -- diplomacy, intelligence, customs authorities, law enforcement, military, and financial -- to stop WMD, their delivery systems and related materials and missile-related proliferation at sea, in the air, and on land.

## How Does the PSI Work?

The PSI is a set of activities based on participating countries' common commitment to the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles. It is not a formal treaty-based organization. The PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles establishes the basis for cooperation on specific activities, when the need arises. It does not create formal "obligations" for participating states, but does represent a political commitment to stop proliferation-related shipments whenever possible and to improve national capabilities and authorities to conduct interdictions.



**U.S. export enforcement field agents search air cargo. (U.S. Department of Commerce)**



**A Customs and Border Protection officer inspects a container with a handheld radiation detector. (U.S. Customs & Border Protection)**

PSI interdiction training exercises and other operational efforts will help states work together in a cooperative, coordinated, and effective manner to stop, search, and seize shipments.

PSI participants are focusing on establishing greater coordination and a readiness to act effectively when a particular action is needed.

Actual interdictions may involve only a few PSI participants, as geography and circumstances require. By working together, PSI partners combine their capabilities to promote readiness.

## How Can States Participate in the PSI?

Many states can play a helpful role in building global counterproliferation capabilities. Cooperation by flag, coastal, or transshipment states, and states along major air shipment corridors is particularly essential to counterproliferation efforts involving cargoes in transit.

After endorsing PSI and the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, states are becoming involved in the PSI in varying ways. The primary focus of the initiative is on actual interdiction operations and operational exercise activities. In particular, PSI operational experts are improving their states' interdiction capabilities. The PSI Operational Experts Group – an expanding network of military, law enforcement, intelligence, legal, and diplomatic expertise – has been meeting periodically to develop new operational concepts, organize an interdiction exercise program, share information about national legal authorities, and pursue cooperation with key industry sectors.



**Australia, the U.S., Japan, and France take part in "Exercise Pacific Protector." (AP)**



**Portuguese customs, defense, "hazmat," and law enforcement officials investigate a container during "NINFA 05," an interdiction training exercise in April 2005. (U.S. Customs & Border Protection)**

The Operational Experts Group works to facilitate involvement in operational activities by all PSI participants. More than forty countries have participated in one or more of the multinational PSI interdiction exercises designed to improve national capabilities and participants' ability to operate together.

These exercises are hosted throughout the world by individual PSI participants and consist of air, maritime, and ground exercises executed by participants' military and law enforcement forces. PSI participants have also conducted sophisticated simulations of interdictions to develop new and creative methods for stopping proliferation shipments.



Participation in the PSI will continue to expand based on countries' responses to the initiative. There are several concrete steps that states can take to establish the basis for their participation in the PSI. They include:

- Formally committing to and publicly endorsing the PSI and the Statement of Interdiction Principles, and indicating willingness to take all steps available to support PSI efforts.
- Undertaking a review and providing information on current national legal authorities to undertake interdictions at sea, in the air, or on land, and indicating willingness to strengthen authorities, where appropriate.
- Identifying specific national "assets" that might contribute to PSI efforts (e.g., information sharing, military, and/or law enforcement assets).
- Providing points of contact for PSI assistance requests and other operational activities, and establishing appropriate internal government processes to coordinate PSI response efforts.
- Being willing to actively participate in PSI interdiction training exercises and actual operations as opportunities arise.
- Being willing to conclude relevant agreements (e.g., boarding arrangements) or otherwise to establish a concrete basis for cooperation with PSI efforts.



**Polish border guards interdict mock chemical precursors during "Exercise Safe Borders," an interdiction training exercise in April 2004. (U.S. Department of State)**

## What Is the Future of the PSI?

PSI participants have developed a global network of counterproliferation partnerships to stop trade in WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials. An important measure of the PSI's success to date is the foundation it provides for states to work together. PSI operational exercises have significantly improved the interoperability of PSI participants and contribute directly to our ability to cooperate on interdictions. These exercises also send a strong deterrent signal to those who would facilitate trafficking in WMD.

The United States will work to maintain and build on these PSI successes, including through further development of real-world partnerships, networks of expert contacts, and operational readiness to conduct cooperative interdictions of WMD-related shipments. We will seek to further develop international law enforcement cooperation and will reach out to intensify our dialogue with industry. The United States will also continue to cooperate with our PSI partners to put in place smooth, effective communications and operational procedures.



**U.S. Customs and Border Patrol use a "VACIS" inspection system to perform a non-intrusive inspection of a container at a U.S. port. (U.S. Customs & Border Protection)**